DC #36

DIRECT CURRENTS

BOOKS SHIPPING IN JANUARY

IN THIS ISSUE:

ANGEL AND THE APE
girl meets the gorilla of her dreams!

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
action-packed adventure!

DR. FATE #25
a twist of fate—and a new beginning!

PLUS...

an interview with Angel and the Ape's PHIL FOGLIO

Cover of the Month
SUICIDE SQUAD #50

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST TOGETHER IN *ANGEL AND THE APE!*

She's blond and beautiful. He's big and hairy and his knuckles scrape the ground when he walks.

They're Angel O'Day and Sam Simeon—a/k/a **ANGEL AND THE APE**—and they're back to star in a miniseries that pits them against one of the greatest threats ever faced by man and ape alike!

Angel is a tough private investigator, Sam is a cartoonist (hey, a talking gorilla's got to work, right?) . . . and Sam's got a problem. He's momentarily been turning human. But who's going to believe his story . . . except his friend and partner Angel, of course?

Mixed up in this mess is Angel's meta-human sister, Athena (also known as Dumb Bunny of the Inferior Five), a group of gorilla goons, and Sam's dangerous grandfather . . . the noted Flash adversary Gorilla Grodd! And, as gorillas are popping up all over the place to set mankind up for a big fall, Angel, Sam, Athena and the rest of the Inferior Five set out to get to the bottom of this hairy situation. Meanwhile, Grodd tries to bring his reluctant grandson back into the ape fold to help wrest control of the Earth from the humans . . . because without Sam, his whole plan will go straight down the drain.

ANGEL AND THE APE, a four-issue miniseries written and pencilled by PLASTIC MAN's Phil Foglio and inked by Keith Wilson—the story of a woman and an ape that will drive you . . . bananas.

FROM • THE EDITOR

This month I received a letter from a reader who asks a question I'm sure many of you wonder about:

To DC Comics:

I would like to know how I could subscribe to DIRECT CURRENTS. Most of my monthly issues are DCs and I would like to be up on the latest shipments of my favorite titles.

Thank you,

Miguel A. Estefan
219 Aspinwall Avenue
Brookline, MA 02146

Miguel:

DIRECT CURRENTS works on a time schedule different from those of the other DC publications. If we did take subscriptions, DIRECT CURRENTS would not reach the readers until one month after the books were on sale. Sorry for the inconvenience, but for now that's how things stand. If any of you would like to receive DIRECT CURRENTS by subscription with the understanding the information will be one month behind, please write and let me know. I can't promise anything, but I will sure pass your responses along.

This month, DC brings back CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN and ANGEL AND THE APE in their own miniseries! This month's interview is with the one and only Phil Foglio, writer and penciller of ANGEL AND THE APE. Also check out the feature article on CHALLENGERS. Remember to get your copies today!

Tammy

A NEW MASTER SORCERER IN *DR. FATE #25*

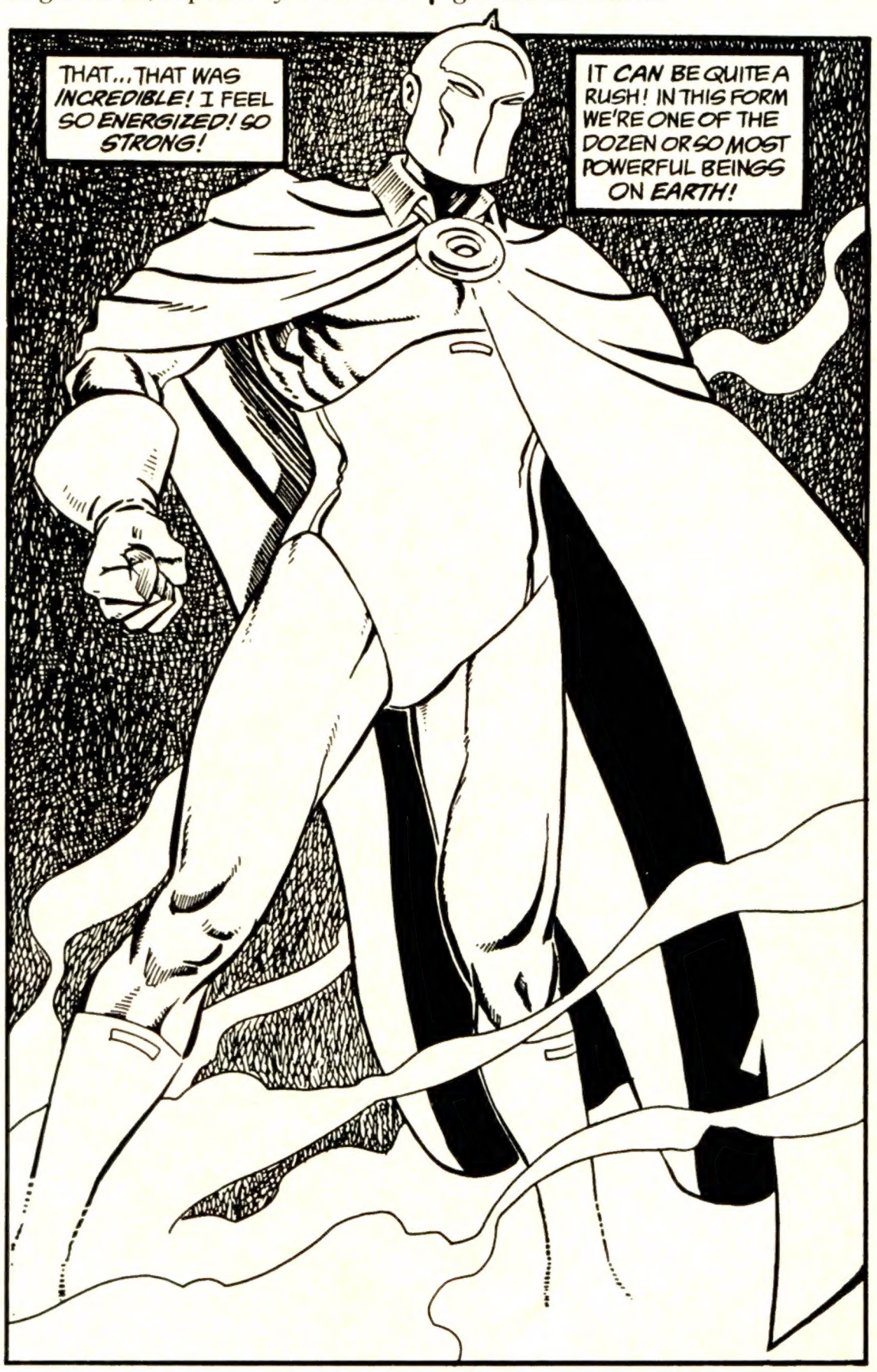
A new era dawns for **DR. FATE** as a new creative team takes over the reins . . . and a new face assumes the mantle of the world's most powerful sorcerer.

Kent and Inza Nelson have returned to Earth, ready to fulfill their destinies together as the new DR. FATE . . . but they soon discover that only one of them can take on the job. And that one is Inza.

Can Inza Nelson handle the magic alone, especially when her first challenge is from the Lords of Order themselves? And how will Kent Nelson—the original Dr. Fate—deal with life as an ordinary man, in the shadow of his wife?

This new chapter in the rich history of DR. FATE also introduces the new creative team of writer William Messner-Loebs, penciller Vincent Giarrano, and inker Peter Gross.

DR. FATE . . . the magic is greater than ever.


THAT...THAT WAS INCREDIBLE! I FEEL SO ENERGIZED! SO STRONG!
IT CAN BE QUITE A RUSH! IN THIS FORM WE'RE ONE OF THE DOZEN OR SO MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON EARTH!

Paul Kupperberg, Writer
Tammy Brown, Editor

DIRECT CURRENTS No. 36 January 1991. Published by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. Copyright © 1990 by DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters, and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Except as otherwise noted, all titles, characters, and related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, DRAGONLANCE, FORGOTTEN REALMS, and SPELLJAMMER are trademarks owned by and licensed from TSR, Inc., © 1990 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved. THE SHADOW Copyright © 1990 by The Condé Nast Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. STAR TREK and STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION Copyright © 1990 Paramount Pictures Corporation. All Rights Reserved. THE NAZZ Copyright © 1990 by Tom Veitch and Bryan Talbot. All Rights Reserved. WORLD WITHOUT END Copyright © 1990 by Jamie Delano and John Higgins. All Rights Reserved.

Printed in Canada

THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN RETURN!

They were four middle-aged men who seemed to have it all. Wealth. Power. Fame. Their names and likenesses appeared on every conceivable piece of merchandising . . . even a mountain and town were named after them.

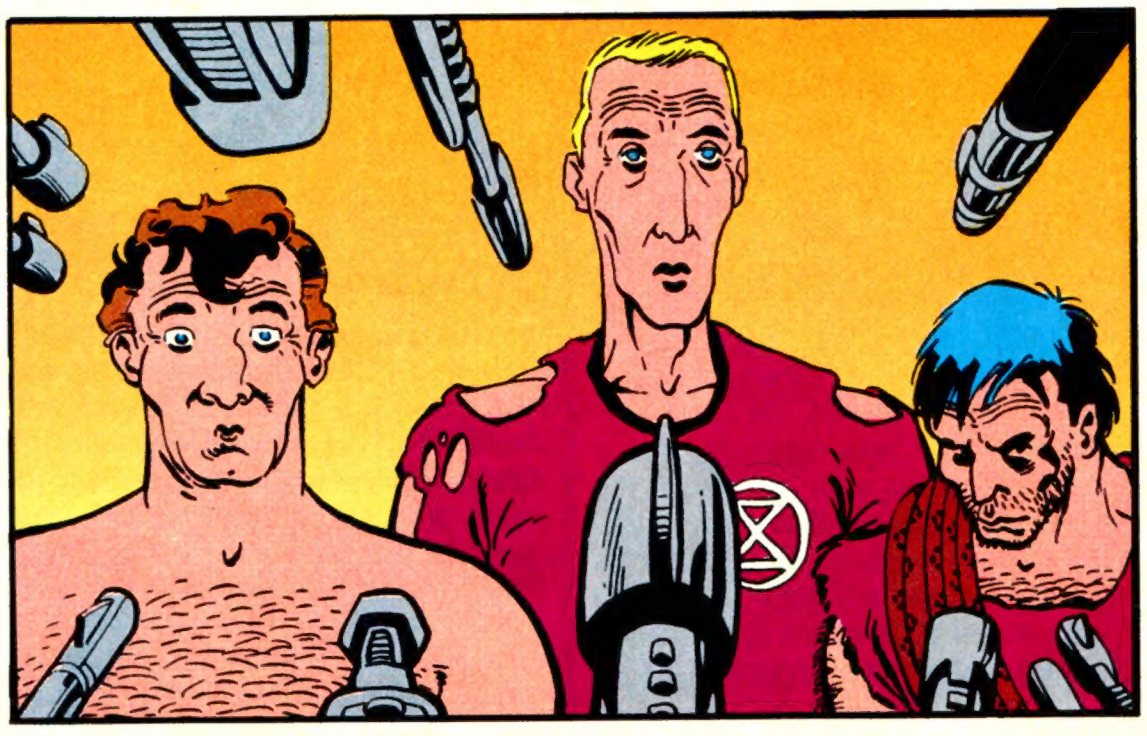
All this adoration is based on a long-ago event and the illusion of the four men—Rocky Davis, Ace Morgan, Red Ryan, and Prof. Haley—the team the world knows as **THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN**. Unfortunately, in a single devastating instant, all their fame and popularity is destroyed when an experiment conducted by Prof. Haley seemingly goes wrong, destroying Challengerville and the theme park, killing hundreds along with Prof. and his assistant, June.

Their safe world shattered, the surviving CHALLENGERS go their separate ways, seeking to fill the void in their lives with adventuring, mysticism, women, and drink. But no matter what divergent roads they take, they're destined to be drawn together again by a mysterious force that's driving normal people to commit horrendous acts of crime and violence . . . and to discover what *really* happened to Prof. Haley and June.

THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN is an eight-issue New Format limited series written by Jeph Loeb, with art by Tim Sale, and first issue cover by Brian Bolland.

THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN . . . four men living on borrowed time.

Time's up.



BOOKS SHIPPING IN JANUARY

☐ **ACTION COMICS #662**
The Earth gives up its dead as the Silver Banshee battles the Crone for the right to return to the land of the living . . . and take her revenge on Superman. Plus, Clark reveals the "big secret" to Lois. Written by Roger Stern, with art by Bob McLeod and Brett Breeding. Cover by Kerry Gammill and Breeding. $1.00

☐ **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ Comics #26**
Part 3 of the 3-part *"Scavengers":* Timoth the Centaur has the Dragonslayer armor . . . as well as plans to use it when he and Vajra face the dragons terrorizing a centaur tribe. Written by Dan Mishkin, with art by Jan Duúrsema and Rick Magyar. Cover by Duúrsema. *(New Format)* $1.75

☐ **THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY #14**
Brimstone, the bounty hunter of the occult (a character from the SUPERBOY TV show), is back in Florida's Capitol City . . . and it's up to Superboy to prevent the mystical manhunter from losing control and killing an innocent child. Written by Tom Peyer and Jonathan Peterson, with art by Curt Swan and Ty Templeton. Cover by Kevin Maguire and Brett Breeding. $1.00

☐ **ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #476**
Part 1 of the 7-part *"Time and Time Again"* series: When Superman and Booster Gold tangle with a menace from the future, the Man of Steel pays a high price when he's drawn into the time-stream. Written and pencilled by Dan Jurgens and inked by Brett Breeding. Cover by Jurgens and Breeding. $1.00

☐ **ANGEL AND THE APE #1**
(of a 4-issue miniseries)
They're baaaack . . . the strangest team of crimebusters ever to hang out a private eye's shingle. They're Angel O'Day and Sam Simeon, blond bombshell and talking ape. Only Sam's been having the unnerving experience of spontaneously turning into a human . . . and it's all got to do with Gorilla Grodd's plan to turn humans into apes. Can Sam and Angel crack the case and save humanity? Written and pencilled by Phil Foglio, with inks by Keith Wilson. Cover by Foglio. $1.00

☐ **ANIMAL MAN #33**
A new phase for ANIMAL MAN begins with new regular writer Tom Veitch (of THE NAZZ) and new regular artist Steve Dillon. Buddy Baker's problems with reality have finally been solved. He has reactivated his career as a stuntman, and is reestablishing ties with his family. But why are the animals in Buddy's neighborhood turning up dead? Who is Buddy's mysterious neighbor? And how do the mysterious Indian Shamans fit into the picture? The next chapter of Animal Man's life provides a deep exploration of his powers and mysteries of the morphogenetic field, as Buddy embarks on a quest to get in tune with his buried emotions. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **AVATAR Comics #2**
(of a 3-issue miniseries)
Elminster the Sage is lost in the labyrinthine folds of magical chaos as the Realms quake in crisis . . . and Midnight, Adon and company stand trial for Elminster's murder. Written by Barbara Kesel, with art by Dameon Willich and Monika Livingston. Painted cover by Willich. *(New Format.* 96 Pages.) $5.95

☐ **BATMAN #460**
Batman is on the trail of a gang responsible for the abduction of young women. Catwoman plans to steal a priceless Egyptian statue. When their paths cross on their separate pursuits, will they find themselves allied . . . or deadly enemies? Written by Alan Grant, with art by Norm Breyfogle and Steve Mitchell. Cover by Breyfogle. $1.00

☐ **BATMAN: THE DAILIES Trade Paperback, Volume 3**
(of a 3-book series)
The third volume of the classic 1940s Batman syndicated newspaper strip reprints the dailies from November 26, 1945 through November 2, 1946, featuring a storyline drawn by Dick Sprang, plus stories and artwork by other creators of the period. This 11" × 8½", 160-page trade paperback edition (co-published with Kitchen Sink Press) also features new editorial material based on interviews with the strip's creators. $12.95

☐ **BATMAN: LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT #15**
Part 5 of the 5-part "Prey": The Batman has faced the nightmares forced upon him by Hugo Strange . . . and the nightmares have won. Now, with only the bats to remind him of a promise, a hope and a dream, he must battle his way back to sanity or see Strange destroy everything he's built in Gotham City. Written by Doug Moench, with art and cover by Paul Gulacy and Terry Austin. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.50

☐ **BOOKS OF MAGIC #3**
(of a 4-book miniseries)
The Queen of Faerie seeks to enslave Timothy Hunter as Dr. Occult takes his turn guiding the boy who might be the world's next great sorcerer through the DC Universe's magical realms, including Warlord's Skartaris, Amethyst's Gemworld, Sandman's Dreamworld . . . and the depths of Hell itself. Written by Neil Gaiman, with fully painted artwork and painted cover by Charles Vess. *(Prestige Format)* $3.95

☐ **CAPTAIN ATOM #50**
It's a battle that can't have a happy ending, with Captain Atom, Plastique and the Red Tornado standing alone against every murderous ally the Ghost can find. This special 44-page anniversary issue brings to an end the continuity begun in the very first CAPTAIN ATOM—and launches the character into an exciting new series of adventures. Written by Greg Weisman, with art by Rafael Kayanan and Romeo Tanghal. Cover by Pat Broderick. $2.00

CAPTAIN ATOM #50

☐ **CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN #1**
(of an 8-issue maxiseries)
They're four wealthy men who have spent their lives living a dream . . . Now comes the nightmare. Past their prime, with their memories used only to sell merchandise, an earth-shattering event catapults the team back into the public spotlight, leaving them devastated by the accusations. Written by Jeph Loeb, with art by Tim Sale. Cover by Brian Bolland. *(New Format)* $1.75

☐ **THE DEMON #9**
A strange cult of Nepalese gurus is attempting to raise the dead . . . but in his haste to leave Gotham City to join a monastery, Jason Blood couldn't care less. And that leaves Harry Matthews, the human pillow, to defend Jason's apartment from Klarion the Witch-Boy and his killer kitty, Teekl. Written by Alan Grant, with art and cover by Val Semeiks and Denis Rodier. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **DETECTIVE COMICS #626**
As Commissioner Gordon fights for his life in the hospital, a macabre assassin calling himself the Electrocutioner terrorizes Gotham City. Will Gordon be his next victim? Written by Marv Wolfman, with art by Jim Aparo and Mike DeCarlo. $1.00

BOOKS SHIPPING IN JANUARY

☐ **DR. FATE #25**
A new era begins as Kent and Inza Nelson return to Earth to fulfill their common destinies . . . only to learn that just one of them can become the next Doctor Fate. Can Inza handle the magic alone—especially when her first challenge comes from the Lords of Order themselves? This issue welcomes the new creative team of writer William Messner-Loebs and artists Vincent Giarrano and Peter Gross. *(New Format)* $1.50

DOOM PATROL #42

☐ **DOOM PATROL #42**
It's the story you've been waiting for . . . the secret origin of the legendary Flex Mentallo! And just wait 'til you find out who and what he is! Plus, the Doom Patrol finds a new headquarters. Written by Grant Morrison with art by Mike Dringenberg and Doug Hazlewood. Painted cover by Simon Bisley. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format)* $1.50

☐ **DRAGONLANCE™ Comics #28**
No information available. *(New Format)* $1.75

☐ **FLASH #48**
When Flash tries to locate his missing mom, he learns that her disappearance is the work of an old adversary bent on returning to power. Plus, meet the newest incarnation of an old DC hero. Written by William Messner-Loebs, with art and cover by Greg LaRocque and José Marzan, Jr. $1.00

☐ **FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Comics #19**
The Realms Master is no more, which leaves Dwalimor Omen and his band of adventurers stranded in a desert without supplies and stalked by wild animals. And then things really get bad. Written by Jeff Grubb, with art by R.A. Morales and Dave Simons. Cover by Morales. *(New Format)* $1.75

☐ **GREEN ARROW #43**
An error in judgment takes Oliver Queen to Belfast, Ireland and places him in the middle of terrorism and death aimed at the royal family. Written by Mike Grell, with art by Denys Cowan and Bill Wray. Cover by Cowan. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.25

☐ **GREEN LANTERN #10**
Part 2 of 4: G'nort and Guy Gardner are two very unlikely allies, but allied they are against the dreaded Weaponers of Qward. But what's the connection between G'nort and Qward . . . and just who are the *real* Guardians of the Universe? Written by Gerard Jones, with art and cover by Joe Staton and Bruce Patterson. $1.00

☐ **HAWK & DOVE #22**
It's a case of Sudden Death as that aptly named villain returns in all his explosive mayhem to settle a personal score with Hawk and Dove. Plus, meet Velvet Tiger, a lady with a "timely" plan for conquest. Written by Barbara and Karl Kesel, with art by Steve Erwin and Will Blyberg. Cover by Erwin and Karl Kesel. $1.00

☐ **HAWKWORLD #9**
Is Byth dead or alive? Katar has to find out before he returns to Thanagar . . . leaving Hawkwoman behind on Earth in prison for Byth's murder. Written by John Ostrander and Tim Truman, with art by Graham Nolan and Gary Kwapisz. Cover by Nolan. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **HELLBLAZER #39**
Constantine learns the frightening circumstances of his birth and may sacrifice his own existence in order to atone. Written by Jamie Delano, with art by Steve Pugh. Painted cover by Kent Williams. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA #48**
The origin of General Glory and Ernie is revealed in a special 5-page flashback . . . after which the JLA is attacked by the mindless, merciless, mechanical monstrosity we like to call the Uberbot. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Linda Medley and John Beatty, and Paris Cullins and Dave Elliott. Cover by Adam Hughes. $1.00

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE EUROPE #23**
Crimson Fox's past catches up with her, forcing her to reveal how she went from French businesswoman Vivian D'Aramis to superpowered heroine . . . a secret somehow linked with the advent of killer worms threatening the world. Written by Keith Giffen and Gerard Jones, with art and cover by Bart Sears and Randy Elliott. $1.00

☐ **JUSTICE LEAGUE QUARTERLY #2**
The origin of Mister Nebula, the cosmic decorator who's set his artistic sights on Earth with the battle cry of "You've Just Got To Do Something With This Planet." Can even the combined forces of the JLA and JLE defeat a being with the power to redecorate worlds like a department store window display? Plus, the first-ever Fire and Ice solo story. 80 pages. Written by Keith Giffen and J.M. DeMatteis, with art by Tom Artis, Randy Elliot, and Bruce Patterson. Cover by Bart Sears. $2.95

☐ **L.E.G.I.O.N. '91 #25**
The L.E.G.I.O.N. strike force manages to breach the Khund Doomsday Device, while back home, Comet and Marij'n try to stop Dox from torturing Lydea. Written by Alan Grant, with art by Barry Kitson. Cover by Garry Leach. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #16**
The Khunds are on the march and their mysterious new weapon, the Red Terror, is destroying worlds as fast as they can use it. Laurel Gand is sent undercover to discover the source of the Khund's religious fervor . . . while the rest of the Legion is divided among two targeted planets in a desperate attempt to thwart the enemy blitzkrieg. Written by Keith Giffen and Tom and Mary Bierbaum, with art by Giffen, Brandon Peterson, and Al Gordon. Cover by Giffen and Gordon. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **MISTER MIRACLE #25**
Barda joins up with those Bad and Beautiful Babes o' Wrestling and defeats their champion . . . but now she's having a bit of trouble "pretending" to fight. And there are dark forces afoot in the game that may take Barda out for the count. Written by Doug Moench, with art and cover by Joe Phillips and Bob Dvorak. $1.00

☐ **THE NAZZ #3**
(of a 4-book miniseries)
The government's search for Michael Nazareth is on! His arrest and release from custody are precipitated by the Nazz's display of his most awesome power—molecular dissolution! Written by Tom

BOOKS SHIPPING IN JANUARY

Veitch, with art and cover by Bryan Talbot and color by Steve Whitaker. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. Prestige Format.)* $4.95

☐ **NEW GODS #24**
The Forever People are back and determined to help save Earth's ravaged environment . . . but when Orion enters the scene, nuclear destruction suddenly becomes imminent. Written by Mark Evanier, with art and cover by Steve Erwin and Will Blyberg. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **THE NEW TITANS #74**
As the "Titans Hunt" continues, meet the mutant called Pantha . . . she's quick, deadly, and out to settle a score with the Wildebeest Society, even if it means killing a few Titans along the way. Written by Marv Wolfman, with art and cover by Tom Grummett and Al Vey. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **ROBIN #3**
(of a 5-issue miniseries)
Robin and Lady Shiva search for the mysterious assassin King Snake, a quest that leads them to an abandoned World War II laboratory where they learn of his plans to destroy a continent. Written by Chuck Dixon, with art by Tom Lyle and Bob Smith. Cover by Brian Bolland. $1.00

☐ **SANDMAN #24**
The dead are returning to life all across Earth as Sandman learns that controlling Hell is not without its problems. The Phantom Stranger guest-stars. Written by Neil Gaiman, with art by Kelley Jones. Painted cover by Dave McKean. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **SGT. ROCK SPECIAL #11**
Re-presenting more classic DC war tales starring the toughest non-com in any army and the combat-happy Joes of Easy Company, including tales written by Robert Kanigher and featuring art by Joe Kubert, John Severin, and other greats of comics art. Cover by Kubert. $2.00

☐ **SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN #9**
Shade's San Francisco trip turns into, like, a real bummer, man. Can he learn to control the Madstream and return to Kathy? Written by Peter Milligan, with art by Chris Bachalo and Mark Pennington. Painted cover by Brendan McCarthy. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **THE SHADOW STRIKES! #17**
The Shadow works to stop the plot of the weird and nefarious Number One and his band of beautiful female assassins . . . but even The Shadow is unprepared for the secret of Number One's true identity. Written by Gerard Jones, with art by Rod Whigham and Gerry Fernandez. Cover by Eduardo Barreto. *(Deluxe Format)* $1.75

☐ **SPELLJAMMER™ #7**
No information available. *(New Format)* $1.75

☐ **STAR TREK® #17**
A planet with strategic importance to both the Federation and Klingon Empire is savagely attacked by marauding aliens. Kirk must team up with a Klingon starship to stop the threat. Written by Howard Weinstein, pencilled by Ken Hooper, and inked by Bob Dvorak. Cover by Jerome Moore. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **STAR TREK®: THE NEXT GENERATION #17**
Trapped in Romulan space, his crew seemingly insane, Captain Picard must use every resource at his command to save the Enterprise. Written by Jan Friedman, with art by Tom Penders and Pablo Marcos. Cover by Jerome Moore. *(New Format)* $1.50

☐ **STARMAN #32**
Part 3 of the 4-part *"Seduction of Starman":* Starman throws himself heart and soul into his fund-raising activities with the Hart organization . . . blatantly ignoring all signs of impending danger. Written by Len Strazewski, with art by Dave Hoover and Scott Hanna. Cover by Hoover. $1.00

☐ **SUICIDE SQUAD #50**
A special double-sized 50th anniversary issue that explores "The Legacy of Rick Flag" as the Squad's 50-year history is recounted, from its creation during World War II, through the 1960s, and into the modern day. Now, to save Flag's legacy, Amanda Waller assembles a special team that includes founding members Nemesis, Nightshade, Bronze Tiger, and Deadshot. Written by John Ostrander and Kim Yale, with art by Geof Isherwood, Luke McDonnell, Grant Miehm, and Karl Kesel. Cover by Isherwood and Kesel. $2.00

SUICIDE SQUAD #50

☐ **SUPERMAN #53**
An international organization enlists the Man of Steel to remove a terrorist dictator from power in a foreign nation wracked by revolution. Also, the reading of Luthor's will. Written and pencilled by Jerry Ordway and inked by Dennis Janke. Cover by Ordway. $1.00

☐ **SWAMP THING #104**
Part 1 of the 6-part *"The Quest for the Elementals":* Fleeing to the Parliament of Trees in Brazil, Swamp Thing and Abby learn all about the mysterious forces of the Grey pursuing their daughter . . . and the Green Elementals missing from the Parliament. Beginning with this issue, Swamp Thing fights to restore the Parliament to full strength before the Grey destroys it *forever!* Also, some startling facts about Swamp Thing's origin are revealed. Written by Doug Wheeler and pencilled by Mike Hoffman. Painted cover by Ian Miller. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **SWAMP THING #105**
Part 2 of the 6-part *"The Quest for the Elementals":* Swamp Thing goes on a mission to rescue a missing member of the Parliament of Trees from imprisonment beneath a Mayan temple. But while he's away, Abby faces a Brazilian death squad. Written by Doug Wheeler and pencilled by Mike Hoffman. Painted cover by Ian Miller. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $1.50

☐ **WHO'S WHO #8**
(of a 16-issue maxiseries)
Forty-eight pages . . . 24 entries . . . including cover-feature character Lobo by Simon Bisley, Crimson Fox by Bart Sears, Killer Croc by Mark Nelson, Kilowog by Larry Stroman, Aqualad by Steve Lightle, The Spectre by Matt Wagner, Darkseid's Elite by John Byrne, Perry White by Dan Jurgens and Dennis Janke, Kent Shakespeare by Chris Sprouse and Al Gordon, and a host of other DC super-stars. *(Deluxe Loose-leaf Format)* $3.95

☐ **WONDER WOMAN #52**
Wonder Woman's relationship to her friends and family comes to a crossroads that may leave her completely alone. Written by George Pérez, with art by Cynthia Martin and Kevin Nowlan. Cover by Pérez. $1.50

☐ **WORLD WITHOUT END #3**
(of a 6-book miniseries)
With Brother Bones in close pursuit, Rumour seeks refuge in the lost, female-dominated society of the Scarlots. Written by Jamie Delano, with fully painted art and painted cover by John Higgins. *(Suggested for Mature Readers. New Format.)* $2.50

people at WORK

PHIL FOGLIO

Phil Foglio doesn't exactly share the prevailing attitude toward the creation of current day comic books. He's probably one of the few creators working in mainstream comics today who remembers *why* they got to be called *comic* books in the first place. "Humor in comics is something I want to do for a long time," he said during a discussion of his latest work for DC, a revival miniseries of the late-1960s humor classic, ANGEL AND THE APE.

"There are so many books that are just so depressing, but I don't think people realize that comedy is a lot tougher to do than drama or tragedy. There are so many cheapshot shortcuts to establishing that a person is evil . . . have him poison a troop of Boy Scouts, throw old ladies off a building. It's easy, it's cheap, and you don't need a reason. "He's crazy, that's why he does it. Because he's mad. Ha ha ha!"

"But proving that somebody is funny, trying to build a character who does weird, humorous things and have the reader *accept* it and say, 'Okay, I see this person doing this and I can understand why he isn't in a small padded room in the laughing academy,' that's a lot tougher." But tough though it may be, Phil has built a career on the premise that the laugh is mightier than the vigilante killer.

"I was born May 1, 1956 in the small town of Mount Vernon, New York," Phil said. "We then moved to an even smaller town in New York called Hartsdale and there I spent the first 17 years of my life in totally useless surroundings. I mean, we're talking suburbia *cubed*. Unless you had a car, you had *nothing* to do, so you either had a hobby like reading or drawing, or you turned into a total veg.

"I was an avid comic book collector as a kid. I forgot what age I started, but I was an incredibly small person . . . I needed two hands to pick one up. I read Gold Keys and DCs . . . the ones that I really remember are Superman and the humor books. INFERIOR FIVE, ANGEL AND THE APE, JERRY LEWIS . . . a lot of it drawn by Bob Oksner, who was a genius at his height on that stuff."

As a kid, Phil wrote and drew his own comic stories and took what he could from high school art classes before shipping off to the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts for serious study. "A place," he says, "that turned out a lot of fine people in the comics and illustration fields, like Hilary Barta, Brian Thomas, Jeff Darrow, Mike Grell . . . everybody from Hal Foster to George Booth. It was a terrific school and the year I graduated they went out of business after 75 years." Having nothing to do, he assured us, with his attendance there.

Though a comic book fan, Phil had his sights set elsewhere. "I was more interested in science fiction illustration and put all my efforts into science fiction fandom and breaking into the illustration field. I won the Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist two years in a row, 1977 and 1978, the youngest person to do so. I can definitely say that the Fan Artist Hugo is a stepping stone to *more* Fan Artist Hugos and that's about it.

"Anyway, after graduation, I hung around Chicago for a while, at which time I was still planning on getting into science fiction illustration and was constantly hearing, 'Well, this is awfully nice, but it's too cartoony and cartoons don't sell.' Which I knew was not true but try telling that to *Analog Magazine*.

"Finally, after everybody telling me that if I was going to make it I was going to have to move to New York, I went off to New York and I did get work, an illustration assignment from Donning/Starblaze to illustrate *MythAdventures*, a series of books by Bob Aspeth. I also did a cartoon back-up called 'What's New' for *Dragon Magazine*, a role-playing game magazine. So I had steady work for three years there.

"Around this time, I finally got into comics. Bob Aspeth had sold the rights to his *MythAdventures* novels to Warp Graphix to do as a comic. They asked if he had anybody in mind to draw them and Bob, who I've known since 1973, recommended me and all of a sudden I was in comic books."

Phil also produced, as both writer and artist, the first two books in a series of graphic novels called *Buck Godot*, a character that got its start in the Chicago-based black-and-white comic *Imagine*. Those initial black-and-white installments led to a contract with Donning/Starblaze to produce the aforementioned graphic novels, future installments of which Phil hopes to produce, either for a major publisher or by publishing them himself.

The Foglio *oeuvre* includes a memorable miniseries starring one of comics' most enduring characters, Plastic Man. "It was daunting," approaching Jack Cole's classic creation. He said, "I'm one of these people who thinks everybody should be exposed to Jack Cole's Plastic Man. And DC has tried relaunching the character before. Doug Rice, Hilary Barta and I were like, what?, the third or fourth revival of the character and all of them, up until ours, had died a dog's death. I never read any of the previous revival attempts, pretty much for that reason. If they died that badly, then I didn't want to read through them and go, 'Hey, this looks like an interesting idea.'

"So I came up with my own take on Plastic Man." In essence, his mind had been altered by the same acid that gave him the power to stretch. It was the only way I could think of to keep a cartoony look to the book while justifying it to the people who would insist on keeping him in the non-cartoony DC continuity."

The ANGEL AND THE APE miniseries is Phil's latest foray into the humor classics.

"ANGEL AND THE APE was one of those ideas that I loved as a kid. I was terribly disappointed when the book died. When I reread them years later, I thought that the concept was really nice but that they never *did* anything with it. It's an interesting study in character dynamics.

"Angel is a really underrated character. She was, as I saw it, the first really competent female character who had her own book. I mean, she ran her own detective agency. She was a crack shot. A martial artist. She may have been drawn to look like a scatterbrain, but obviously she wasn't. Nine times out of ten she solved her own problems, even if Sam occasionally had to jump in there and apply a little muscle. But she was the one telling him what to do. So at the time, there really were no decent women characters and I think she stood out in my mind because of that. I thought she deserved to be treated better by posterity.

"And there were a lot of things I wanted to know about the characters. Like where did Sam Simeon come from? How was he able to function in society? In the original series, when anybody saw Sam they went 'Holy cow, it's a gorilla!' and had a brain embolism and died. But this ignored the fact that he was established in society. He had a driver's license. He had a private detective's license. He had a tailor who made his suits. He rented an apartment. *How* did he get that? People do not rent apartments to gorillas!

"Well, the answer is that Sam comes from Gorilla City and Gorilla Grodd is his grandfather. Where else do you find intelligent, talking gorillas? And the theory is that Sam has his own brand of mental powers, the ability to convince you of things. Like, if you're talking to him, you just don't happen to notice he's a gorilla. It's only when his concentration slips that people notice he's a gorilla."

With proposals in for a second PLASTIC MAN miniseries, as well as a revival of another classic DC humor series, it sounds as though Phil is singlehandedly looking to revive the humor genre in comics.

"Well, I think it could certainly use it. There are so many great humor characters out there but the trouble is, I don't work fast. I can only put out a couple of books a year, especially with a humor title, which can burn you out pretty fast. It's not like doing an action-oriented book, which I did for a while as the writer on Dynamo Joe for First Comics. Compared to humor, it was easy. I worked with Doug Rice on it. Man's a genius . . . he had the story, so it was pretty much just collaborating with him and working on the script. I got the scripting credit, through Doug easily did half the work.

"What's the solution? The way I try to keep it fresh is by doing a lot of different things. I go from ANGEL AND THE APE to another project, than on to something like a novel, my second one, written with Nick Palatta, which is out making the rounds now. When I'm finished with that, I'll just do some artwork, paint a picture, work on a play or something. The idea is to do enough different things that your brain doesn't have time to calcify in one particular trench."

When reminded of the old show-biz adage that "dying is easy, comedy is tough," Phil was emphatic in his agreement. "That's true," he said. "That pretty much sums it up."

It also sums up Phil Foglio's work. It's not easy, but it's sure worth the effort.

BATMAN IN DETECTIVE COMICS

BATMAN artist Norm Breyfogle presents his interpretation of the DETECTIVE COMICS #27 cover as it will be seen on DETECTIVE COMICS #627!